

TOPIC 10: yourCHOICE What's New?

Skill-Based Outcomes

Preteens who participate in this activity will be able to:

- ❖ Try foods they've never tasted.
- ❖ Talk about new foods without "yucks" before deciding if they like them.
- ❖ Respect each others opinions about foods.
- ❖ Fit new foods into their meals and snacks.
- ❖ Use the "5-20" guide to nutrition labeling to compare and choose new foods.

Empowerment Messages

- ❖ Try not to be afraid to try new things, such as unfamiliar foods and new ways to get moving.
- ❖ Stores and restaurants are full of foods you've never tried. You won't know if you like them until you try them. Give new foods a chance.
- ❖ Trying new foods can be fun, exciting, and interesting. You may even like them in your meals and snacks. And tasting experiences will help you enjoy social events where some foods are often unfamiliar.
- ❖ Different foods help keep you healthy in different ways. In fact, being adventurous with food broadens your choices and enjoyment. And eating different kinds of foods helps you get the nutrients you need to grow, feel good, and be your best.

Activity Summary

(Icebreaker) **Pleasure of Trying!** - With an easy demonstration, preteens discover that the adventure of trying something new can have pleasant results.

1 Food Neophobia* - Preteens learn the term “food neophobia,” as they discover ways to overcome any fear of trying new foods.

2 (Afterschool Snack) Give Food a Try!* - A food trying activity gives them a chance to discover the flavors of many new foods, to see how these foods fit into the food groups, and to see that new foods can be fun to try.

3 Facts About New Foods - In pairs or small groups, they use the “5-20” guide to find out the Nutrition Facts for each new food.

(Wrap up) **What's yourCHOICE?** - Each person comes up with personal steps to introduce new foods in his or her meal and snack choices. In this last session, each person who has taken at least one step to healthier eating and active living gets a Power of Choice Recognition Certificate.

* Adapted from *Go Girls!*

Getting Ready

● Read:

- ❖ Do You Know...? on the next page

● Display Posters:

- ❖ *Read It Before You Eat it!*
- ❖ *Feed Me!*
- ❖ *Move It!*
- ❖ *FIGHT BAC!*

● Get:

For "Pleasure of Trying!"

- ❖ Crisp dollar bill
- ❖ Paper grocery bag

For "Food Neophobia"

- ❖ One sheet of 8½ x 11-inch paper, marker

For "Give Food a Try!" (snack activity)*

Selecting unusual or different foods will cost extra; only some of the costs may be reimbursable as snack items.

- ❖ One or two blindfolds
- ❖ Select untypical foods for tasting, such as:
 - *Fruit Group*: papaya, mango, kiwi, honeydew melon, Asian pear, blackberries
 - *Vegetable Group*: jicama, kohlrabi, asparagus, squash, plantain, sweet potatoes, snow peas, turnips, parsnips, bok choy, sprouts, red bell pepper, tofu
 - *Bread Group*: naan bread, whole-wheat bread or pita, flavored tortillas, whole-grain rice, spinach pasta, bulgur
 - *Milk Group*: yogurt, skim milk, lowfat flavored milk
 - *Meat Group*: assorted beans and lentils, veggie burgers, various nuts, nut butters
- ❖ Equipment: cutting boards; knives; bowls, paper plates, and utensils to serve foods
- ❖ Table setting: paper plates, cups, forks, napkins

* If your program has been approved to serve USDA's Afterschool Snacks, the snack served as part of this activity may qualify for reimbursement. For each participant, **serve at least enough tasting foods of any two different components from the following four:**

Milk, fluid	1 cup (8 ounces)
Meat or Meat Alternate	1 ounce
Fruits or Vegetables or full-strength juice	¾ cup (6 ounces)
Grains or Breads	1 serving

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❖ Do:

- Try to include foods preteens haven't tasted before. Offer foods from all five food groups with enough different foods included, so each person has a chance to describe a different food while blindfolded.
- Keep or collect Nutrition Facts labels for foods you taste. You may need to ask in the produce department; Nutrition Facts may appear nearby but not necessarily on the produce.
- Buy and prepare foods ahead so they're ready to taste before you start the session; you can reheat foods in a microwave or conventional oven. Have food in tasting-size bites; leave one of each food whole so preteens see how it looks.

For "Facts About New Foods"

- ❖ Nutrition Facts labels for any foods they just tasted from the snack activity

For "Wrapping Up: What's yourCHOICE?"

- ❖ "yourCHOICE" handout for each participant
- ❖ (Optional) some form of recognition for each participant, as offered in previous sessions
- ❖ Power of Choice Recognition Certificate (for all who took at least one step toward healthier eating and active living during the program)

Do You Know...?

Why do people like different foods? Food doesn't have the same flavor for everyone. Our taste buds differ; some people have more than others. That's one reason why some people like spicy-hot flavors, and others don't. Aroma and temperature are part of flavor; we sense smell and touch differently, too. Smoking, some illnesses, and some medications also change the way food tastes.

Most people enjoy familiar foods. The more often you try a food, the more familiar it gets, and often, the more you like it. So don't be surprised if you don't like a food the first time you taste it. Try it again and maybe again. Many people prefer family foods and their own ethnic foods, in part, because they are so familiar.

Why try new foods? Because you might like them! You won't ever know if you like a food or like anything else, for that matter, if you don't try it. Trying new foods can be a whole new adventure. The other question is: why not have a taste? Even if you don't like it, you can always say you gave it a try!

There's a health reason, too. Being adventurous with food broadens your choices and helps you get the 40-plus different nutrients you need for good health. A healthful approach to eating that includes different kinds of foods helps you reach the goals you set for yourself.

How many foods can you pick from? You may not realize how many choices you have! Supermarkets, on average, carry 30,000 different items; most are foods. Yet, for many people, the same eight or 10 "core" foods make up most of the purchases when they shop.

Another reason: When you cut down on foods you like—perhaps because they have a lot of fat or sugar or not much calcium or fiber—it's great to have new foods in exchange.

How can you enjoy new foods? Whether familiar or not, you'll enjoy any food more when it looks and smells good.

- ❖ Serve hot food hot and cold food cold. Besides being safer, it tastes better! For example, milk tastes best cold to most people.
- ❖ Store food properly, so it's at its best quality when you eat it. Again, that's when food is safe to eat. For example, crisp vegetables taste better than limp ones.
- ❖ Cook properly; avoid overcooking. Many foods lose their bright colors and firm textures when they're cooked too long. They may lose nutrients, too.
- ❖ Serve food so it looks nice. Try to have different colors, shapes, and textures on a plate so food looks more appealing.
- ❖ Try a new food with familiar foods. Taste the new food first while you feel the hungriest.

Tip for Leaders:

For more tips on trying new foods, check *It's All About You* on the computer disk beginning with the message: Be Adventurous!

yourCHOICE What's New?

Topic 10 Activities

Getting Started: **Pleasure of Trying!**

Introduce the adventure of trying with a quick icebreaker. Before the session and without anyone seeing what you're doing, put a crisp dollar bill into a paper grocery bag.

ASK *what they had for lunch today* to get them thinking about food.

Tell the group: Inside this bag, there's something green and crisp. It's made from a plant—but you can't grow it. It's very, very flat; in fact, each side looks different. People from faraway lands like it. It would be weird in a salad.

ASK, and have preteens raise their hands to respond:

- ❖ After all the fun we've had learning about vegetables, what do you think it is?
- ❖ Does anyone want to reach in for it—even though you don't know what it is?
- ❖ Is anyone afraid of reaching in for something that you can't really identify?

Let the first person who raised his or her hand reach in and take what's inside. **ASK:**

- ❖ Was it worth being adventurous? Were you pleasantly surprised?
- ❖ Now who wishes they'd tried?
- ❖ When is it okay to be adventurous?
- ❖ What keeps you from trying something unfamiliar? **Probe** to find out if fear keeps anyone from trying new things.

Keep the discussion open-ended so preteens talk freely, and everyone gets a chance to share his or her thoughts.

Activity 1: Food Neophobia

Through a short discussion, help preteens think more about why people avoid trying new foods.

Write the word “neophobia” where everyone can see it.

- ❖ **ASK** preteens if they know the word or if they can recognize any part of it. Even if they don’t know the word, they might have heard similar words before:

- neonate (newborn baby)
- neophyte (beginner)
- claustrophobia (fear of confined spaces)
- arachnophobia (fear of spiders)

- ❖ **POINT OUT:** Neophobia means a fear of new things.

ASK: Does anyone have “food neophobia” (fear of trying new foods)? Why or why not? **POINT OUT:** Today you’ll have the chance to try new foods to help overcome any fear of making changes in the way you eat.

Activity 2: Give Food a Try!

Food trying helps preteens get more adventurous with food and overcome food neophobia. Try to pick foods they haven't tasted before. Get foods ready ahead of time, so they're ready to try.

Give preteens a chance to wash their hands before handling foods. Talk about this food safety tip. From one of your tasting foods, show preteens a package with safe handling instructions. Refer to the messages on the *FIGHT BAC!* poster.

Food Safety-Smarts: Look for the safe handling instructions on packages of meat and poultry. They tell you how to keep food safely at home.

Before starting to taste, go over the “new food” taste-testing guides.

Ask tasters to be objective about their experiences.

- ❖ Everyone will be given a chance to try the new foods—at least one bite.
- ❖ There are no “yucks.” Differences in our taste buds and food experiences give us different reactions to food.
- ❖ You can't say you like or dislike the food or that it tastes good or bad. Just describe the flavor, temperature, aroma, and then the appearance.

Have preteens taste test one new food at a time, as you talk together about their experiences.

- ❖ **For each food, blindfold one or two tasters to take the first taste and describe it.** (There's no peeking under or through the blindfold.) See if they can figure out what kind of food it is (e.g., fruit, vegetable, grain, milk product).
- ❖ **Then give everyone a chance to taste.**
- ❖ **Have preteens put the food in its food group** using the *Feed Me!* poster.
- ❖ **Talk more about each food they taste:**
 - How does it compare to other foods you tried?
 - How can you eat this food in an easy meal or snack?
 - How can you combine it with other foods?
- ❖ **Repeat the food tasting with other foods** and other volunteers until everyone has tasted every food. If someone chooses not to taste one or more foods, it's okay. Be sensitive about foods that some cultures and religions avoid.

After tasting, talk about the whole experience. (ASK:)

- ❖ Were you surprised by the flavors of any of these foods? How?
- ❖ Why do you think we tasted new foods today?
- ❖ What did you learn? **Probe** until they recognize that it is a good idea to try a new food before deciding if you like or dislike it. (POINT OUT: Sometimes it takes several tries before a new food gets familiar enough to enjoy. You never know what you might be missing until you try new things.

Activity 3: Facts About New Foods

*Give preteens more practice with label reading. Have the **Read It Before You Eat It!** poster handy.*

Start by asking:

- ❖ You just tasted new foods. How can you find out more about them?
- ❖ What can you check for nutrition information? (*Nutrition Facts on the label*)
- ❖ How might you use what you find out?

In pairs or small groups, have preteens check the Nutrition Facts for the new foods. Remind them to use the “5-20” guide to nutrition labeling. Have them tell the whole group what they find out.

Have them come up with benefits for being adventurous and trying different kinds of foods. Talk about the nutrition benefits—and the fun! They can’t say they like or dislike a food unless they try it!

Wrapping Up: What's yourCHOICE?

Wrap up by making “yourCHOICE” action plans for trying new foods.

Review what they learned in this session. **ASK:**

- ❖ Why would you give new foods a chance? **POINT OUT:** *The Power of Choice* activities encourage you to eat more lower fat foods, especially those low in saturated fat, and smaller amounts of higher fat foods. It's also good to try new foods; you'll have more “different” kinds of foods to choose from. There are lots of healthful foods you haven't tried yet.
- ❖ What's the benefit of having a choice of different kinds of foods?
- ❖ How can you try all kinds of new foods and fit them in your meal and snack choices? **Talk about the goals and actions they can take.**
(For example, *GOAL: Learn to eat some new vegetables. Actions: Buy a new vegetable at the store, and prepare it with my family. Eat a new, raw vegetable with dip. Add one new vegetable to my salad.*)

On their “yourCHOICE” handout, have each person write a goal and three steps he or she can take this week to enjoy new food-group foods in meals and snacks. (Note: They can share the actions they took with their families and friends.)

See how the participants did with *all the goals and action steps they wrote for the previous nine topics*. On the handout, have them check (✓) the steps they took for the last topic. (Optional) Each person who took at least one action receives some form of recognition.

If this is your last Power of Choice activity, wrap it up!

Talk together about what's important in their lives and how to use goal-setting and decision-making skills to be the best they can be and to reach their goals. In Topic 1, pages 3 to 5, you explored values and goals together.

Go over their “yourCHOICE” handout. Talk about all the goals and action steps they wrote and those they actually did (checked off) since the program began.

Acknowledge their success. Recognize everyone who took at least one step to eat healthier foods and move more—and stuck with it! Congratulate them with a Power of Choice Recognition Certificate.

Encourage preteens to keep their “yourCHOICE” handout as a personal contract. **Suggest:**

- ❖ Try to check off more healthful eating and active living steps.
- ❖ Post it on the refrigerator at home to remind yourself of steps you can take.
- ❖ Share it with your family. They can make healthful choices, too, and reinforce what you're doing!

